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A Candid view of the
Presidential Question.
John Kintzing Kane.
Philadelphia, 1828.

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John Kintzing Kane
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A

CANDID VIEW

OF THE

PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION,

BY

A PENNSYLVANIAN.

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A CANDID VIEW

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PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION.

WHO OUGHT TO BE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT?

Political zealots will answer this question at once, by a reference to the decision of some party tribunal: but the candid and reflecting will find it necessary to consider many things before they decide. I am merely a citizen, pledged to the dogmas of no partisan leader, with nothing to hope from either candidate, and nothing to fear, except in common with the other good people of the country. I am interested in the perpetuation of our free institutions, for I have children; I am anxious that our government should give repose at home, and protection abroad to all who support it, for I am an American by birth and in principle; and I am zealous for its honour: it is the part of my patrimony, which I am most unwilling to squander.

I have thought over the matter carefully; and the following pages record my opinions, as they have been dispassionately formed, of the characters of the two candidates, and of their claims to the public gratitude and confidence. I have offered them to the printer, because, as truth can never wear two faces, they may perhaps lead others to think as I do; or perhaps they may invite some better regulated mind to expose my errors, and thus lead me to a more correct conclusion than that which I have formed for myself. I care little for Mr. Adams or General Jackson, compared with my country and the cause of truth.

What are the personal characters of the candidates? This is with me the primary question: a reprobate at home, can make but a sorry saint abroad.

To answer this question, we must look at the conduct of the two men, and at the circumstances in which they have been placed. Character can be fairly judged of in no other way. There is little merit in him, who, never being tempted, has never sinned; and he may readily be pardoned, who, living always in obscurity, has had no opportunity of doing service to the state.

Luckily for the impartial inquirer, the history of both is easily read, and the difference between them is so boldly marked, that no one can confound their characteristic virtues, or their peculiar faults.

PERSONAL CHARACTER.

Andrew Jackson was the son of a farmer, who died while his children were young, bequeathing to them little more than a spotless name. Before he was fifteen years of age, with the enthusiasm which has always marked his career, Jackson enrolled himself with his two brothers, in the ranks of the Revolutionary army. His eldest brother died soon after on the field of battle; the other sunk under the effects of a neglected sabre-wound; and his mother yielding to the pressure of her sorrows, shortly followed them to the grave. Andrew Jackson was thus left at an early age without a protector, and almost without a kinsman. After a service, distinguished for its fidelity and spirit, where all were faithful and gallant, he left the camp, and applied himself assiduously to the study of the law. He had been admitted to the bar of North Carolina, when in 1788, he took up his abode in the then wilderness of Tennessee. His strong manly sense, his integrity and warmth of heart, soon gathered a circle of friends around him, of the blunt yeomanry of that district: he imbibed their frank and generous spirit; and perhaps partook of their faults. It is said, that in early life, he was fond of the sports of the field, and that he so far yielded to the false notions of honour by which the western states are yet distinguished, as to take part in a duel.

Years of patriotic service, and of uninterrupted regard to the obligations of piety have not been sufficient, in the estimation of some among us, to wipe out this offence. Perhaps they are right; but the people among whom he lives have been more charitable. They have surely forgiven him at home. He is now the guardian, whom men select for their orphans, he is the executor of their wills, the arbiter whom neighbours invite to decide their disputes, the adviser of the widow and the friendless. Nor, it would seem, has the country been more severe. The State of Tennessee has showered its honours upon him; the national government has invited him to a seat in the Cabinet; the Presbyterian Church, always slow to confide in those who have erred, has named him as the head of one of her most important committees; and the people of the west, who know him better than we can, have united warmly in supporting him for the highest office in the land.

Mr. Adams was the son of a rich and distinguished citizen of Massachusetts. From his infancy, he was surrounded by all the captivating refinement of literature and ease: his desk was covered with books, and his board with delicacies. He was, however, always temperate in his habits, and prided himself most on the untiring assiduity, with which he could continue to direct all his powers to a single object. He inherited the fiery and vindictive passions of his father; but admonished by his father's errors, he was enabled at an early age, to assume the staid and still character, which from the days of the pilgrims has marked the outward demeanour of the people of New England. He had some of the virtues, and not a few of the less respected traits of the Yankee character. Like his brethren, he was industrious, frugal, cautious, and moral in his external deportment; but liberality of temper and of purse, freedom from selfishness, and frankness of spirit, have never been enu-

merated among the points of his character. He kept from childhood, and still keeps, a diary, in which he has not failed to make daily registry of whatever he has said of things or persons, and whatever others have said to him; a practice admirably fitted to provide before hand the materials of future controversy; but which makes few friendships. Mr. Adams has no personal friends. His Boston associations have protected him from the enormity of duelling; for in Massachusetts, no respectable man would bear a challenge: but the same associations have made him more correct in his conduct than in his creed; and those of his advocates, who differ from him in religion, regret that he has been led away into the errors of the Unitarian church. He is not popular:—of the offices which it has been his fortune to fill, one only has been the gift of the people. It was his first office, that of member of the Massachusetts Senate: he was afterwards a candidate for Congress, but failed. In the transactions of private life, his honesty has never been successfully assailed; but his supporters admit, that his frugality sometimes approaches parsimony, and that his extreme accuracy might in some instances, be mistaken for meanness.

Both are men of excitable temperament. General Jackson is perhaps more easily roused, but Mr. Adams' passion is more lasting. The former speaks as he feels, and when he feels: the latter reflects, and still is angry, but speaks not. As the analogies of human character would lead us to expect, General Jackson is quick to resent an injury, and as quick to forgive one: he keeps no record of his disputes. Had he such a diary as Mr. Adams has, he would find it more difficult to forget the wrongs he has received. General Jackson has warm affections, and repays kindness with cordiality: Mr. Adams, more confident perhaps in his own powers, has a lower estimate of the value of friendship. It was a severe remark, but it came from a man who had served him often, that, "like the unfortunate head of the house of Stuart, he has never forgotten an enemy, or remembered a friend."

It must be acknowledged too, that Mr. Adams has not always selected the most appropriate moments for the expression of his opinions and feelings. It would have been better, to assail Fisher Ames, while living and armed for defence, than to accuse his memory, however boldly. The celebration of our National festival was not honoured by his grateful reminiscences of the mental calamity, with which it pleased Heaven to visit the sovereign, from whose allegiance we had withdrawn:—besides, we were at peace with that sovereign, and the orator was our Secretary of State. Our government during the late war was doubtless enfeebled by our domestic dissensions, and endangered by foreign pressure; yet, our minister at the court of a mediating power, should have forborne to characterize it as weak and penurious. The victory at North Point might have been freshly remembered in his flowing soul, without breathing a sentiment of blood upon the libation, or sneering at the obsequies of a gallant soldier.

It would be easy to multiply these illustrations. But it is not necessary in an enquiry into the personal character of the candidates.

It should be conceded at once, that both are respectable as private citizens; each having faults, no doubt; but both of them known as good members of the family, and of the neighbourhood, and of the wider circle of society. Neither is wanting in apparent respect for religion. Mr. Adams is a constant attendant of the several churches at Washington, and General Jackson has long been an habitual worshipper with the congregation nearest his residence. Either of them, placed in the office of President, will be sufficiently exemplary, as a man.

PUBLIC SERVICES OF MR. ADAMS.

We come to another question: what has been the character of the two candidates in public life?

They have been long before the public; both have filled important offices: let their history be examined candidly, but freely and without fear.

The education of Mr. Adams was well fitted to prepare him for a political career. He pursued his collegiate studies with assiduity and success: few have graduated with more distinction. There is, however, a department of education, too often neglected, which exerts a yet more important influence over the character of the pupil. It is the education of example, of the household. Mr. Adams, as a politician, here too was fortunate. His father had led in the assemblies of the people, he was prominent in the state and general congress of the Revolution, and in early life at least, had the reputation of a singularly popular and influential man.

To one who has studied language more than mankind, it would appear strange, that in a nation of republicans, love of country, and love of the people, popularity and patriotism should have meanings so widely different. The well known distinction is in the object. The politician, who seeks only his own advancement, finds it indispensable that he should secure popular favour:—the patriot may be, and for a time often is, unpopular.

The father of Mr. Adams understood this distinction perfectly well. Probably, no man who has held office in our country, was more ambitious of public applause, or more supremely selfish in his ultimate object. Governor Hutchinson says, that he knew him to declare in early life, "so long as there is one man superior to me in wealth, in power, or in station, I cannot be happy." The father, skilled and disciplined in all the arts of the politician and the courtier, himself undertook the political education of his child; and before Mr. John Q. Adams had attained the age of manhood, he himself became a politician and courtier by profession.

It is scarcely possible to expose the moral firmness of a young man to a severer trial. Persuade him, that influence, and fame, and office, are the objects of life; and native ingenuousness and youthful integrity, the bud and promise of his character, wither and fade away. He becomes convinced by degrees of the truth of that apothegm of the elder Adams: "in political conduct, the party, which is least scrupulous in the use of means, has the best chance of success;" and in a few years, he finds himself prepared, like Gen. Conway, in the British Parliament, to employ every auxiliary "which God and Nature may have put into his hands."

Yet this was the trial, to which Mr. John Q. Adams was exposed from his very boyhood. He was little more than ten years old, when he began those circuits of the European courts, to which more than a third of his whole life has been devoted. His earliest associations were with politicians, among whom selfishness was the universal principle of action:—he has lived in one almost unbroken sequence of diplomatic dignities:—his years have been spent among political negotiations, in which dissimulation is too often essential to success, and address is recognized as the substitute of virtue. He saw power jeoparded and lost by manly feeling and unsuspecting honour: he saw it acquired and retained by every intriguing statesman, who had wit enough to deceive his associates, or baseness enough to betray them. These things he saw; and he had been taught by his father, that power was the great end of living.—

Mr. Adams had been for many years a public minister, when the election of Mr. Jefferson drove his father into retirement. Apprehensive that he might be recalled, or unwilling perhaps to give his countenance to what then appeared to him an ephemeral administration, he left the Court of Berlin in 1801, and on his return to America, was at once hailed by the Federal party of Massachussetts, as one of their most favoured champions.

He justified their affection by the zeal with which he entered into their views, and the devotion with which he laboured to advance them. In the grave assemblies at Faneuil Hall, he was the federal moderator:—no man was more faithful in the toils of the committee-room:—his exuberant style gave warmth and brilliancy to their addresses and reports: and the lighter productions of satire and ridicule were indebted to him for almost all their pungency. His allusion in the poem of "Dusky Sally" to Mr. Jefferson's domestic habits, has been censured as indecent; but it was in the spirit of the day. Fessenden, and a tribe of humbler poetasters followed in his wake, and some who could not rival his wit, were yet praised for the accuracy with which they imitated the less praiseworthy characteristics of his effusions. Mr. John Q. Adams was the fondling of Federal hope.

The earliest opportunity was seized, to bring him upon the theatre of political life. In 1802, he was chosen a member of the Massachusetts Senate. His conduct in this office secured yet more firmly the confidence of the leading federalists; though his extreme ardour had the unhappy effect of diminishing the confidence of the people at large: At the election which followed for a Congress-man from Boston, he was a candidate again; but his democratic opponent was elected. The next winter repaid the mortification of this defeat: a Senator of the United States was to be chosen; and in spite of the persevering hostility of the democratic members, the federal majority in the Legislature, of which he was a member, succeeded in appointing Mr. Adams.

Massachusetts was at this period the focus of federalism, and Mr. Adams was its appropriate representative. He took his seat in the council of the nation, the same bold implacable federalist, that he had been while a candidate. His political associates from the middle and

southern states, were startled at the fierceness of his denunciations, and the bitterness of his feeling. He had become under the constitution, one of the President's official advisers; but such were his opinions of Mr. Jefferson, that he shrunk from his approach, and withdrew even from the courtesies of the Presidential mansion. For five years he continued the unwavering, unpitying leader of the party.

The political sentiments of the nation, had, however, undergone a change. The federalists in their adversity, had taken counsel rather of feeling than policy; and adopting unconsciously the tone of Mr. Adams, whose filial reverence doubtless added severity to his party rancour, they had lost by their violence many of their more timid, and not a few of their most judicious supporters. The defeat of Mr. Adams, senior, in 1800, was followed up in 1804 by the second election of Mr. Jefferson; and one state after another, adopted the political sentiments of the general government. But in New England, the federalists still retained the ascendancy; and it was not till 1807, that the democrats triumphed in Massachusetts. This election, however, sealed the political character of the Union: the "men on the fence," as they have since been termed, no longer found a difficulty in choosing sides; and the defeated federalists saw opponents rising round them in every district. It seemed that the rout was about to become universal, and politicians were hourly expecting the *sauve qui peut* to begin.

But they who had elected Mr. John Adams to the presidency, and who, when at the second election he fell by his own weight, had transferred their support to Mr. Burr, were men of Roman nerve. It would have been vain to nominate one of their own body, in opposition to Mr. Madison, who was already indicated by the democrats as the successor to Mr. Jefferson; but they still stood firm in their party-ranks, determined to contend for their principles to the last. They could not fail to observe, that their overthrow was attributable in a great degree, to the violent counsels of Mr. John Q. Adams; but even in the vexation of defeat, they had too much honour to forsake, and too much gallantry, even to reproach him.

It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that Mr. Adams meditated his greatest political movement. The principles which he had imbibed in boyhood from his father, naturally suggested it; but it required all the philosophy which he had gathered in his courtly circuits, to carry it into execution.

Early in the winter of 1807, while attending the Senate at Washington, he waited on Mr. Giles* of Virginia, the confidant of the President,

*Note.—Though this account of Mr. Adams' communications with Mr. Giles and Mr. Jefferson has been long before the public, and has never been contradicted, it may be proper to declare the authority on which it rests. It was first published by Governor Giles himself in the Richmond Enquirer under his own signature, in the month of February, 1828, together with a letter from Mr. Jefferson to Governor Giles on the same subject. Governor Giles has since frequently repeated the story, and has invited Mr. Adams to deny it, if untrue. Mr. John Randolph and the aged Mr. Macon, who were both in Congress in 1807—8, have affirmed its truth on the floor of the Senate.

and announced to him a perilous and most important secret. The federalists of New England, he said, had long found in him an associate in politics; but he could not bring himself to be their accomplice in treason. He then went on to detail the circumstances of a conspiracy, having for its object the dismemberment of the Union, and the annexation of the Eastern States to the Province of Canada: he declared the names of the ringleaders, men united to him by the treble ties of party friendship, and blood; and finally, he announced his determination to ally himself with that patriotic party whom he had heretofore opposed, while he absolutely declined by anticipation, any office with which they might be disposed to reward his adhesion.

At Mr. Giles' invitation, as that gentleman has since informed the public, this singular communication was repeated by Mr. Adams to Mr. Jefferson in person, coupled with new denunciations of the men who had always been his patrons, and some of whom, by a singular misapplication of loyalty, are yet found among his adherents.

The President wondered and believed. How could he do otherwise? The man who had shunned him as an adder, now came frankly into his cabinet, as one who sacrifices personal antipathies to public duty: it was the chief of the federalists who came to reveal the secrets of their nefarious counsels: it was the son of old Mr. Adams, denouncing men who were his father's advisers while in office, and who had shared his defeat. How could he doubt? Even Mr. Madison, with all his characteristic wariness, was unable to resist the well told story: he too believed it; and a few years afterwards, when President, he applied a large sum of public money, to purchase from the notorious John Henry, a packet of evidence in support of the charge.

It has been said, that new converts are the most zealous: a few weeks enabled Mr. Adams to prove that he had transferred his zeal, as well as his confidence, to the democratic administration. On the 18th of December, Mr. Jefferson by a secret message, recommended the imposition of further restrictions on our foreign commerce. A bill was immediately introduced into the Senate, laying an embargo on all vessels in our ports, and at three o'clock in the afternoon, little more than two hours after the message was presented, the bill had passed the Senate, and was before the House of Representatives. Such pressing haste in a matter that went to the annihilation of our trade, was deprecated by the federal Senators, and by several gentlemen of the other party. Mr. Macon and Mr. Crawford, solicited a postponement of the question, till the following morning: they wished time, they said, to deliberate; perhaps the reasons in favour of the measure might be sufficient; but they doubted. Mr. Adams was the immediate representative of a district, whose interests were to be most affected by the proposed law: one fifth of all the exports of the United States were at that time from the ports of Massachusetts. He rose, and in reply to Mr. Crawford, made the wonderful declaration: "I would not deliberate—I would not hesitate—I would act: Doubtless the President, who has recommended this measure, has such further reasons as will justify it." The bill was passed: and to this

hour, very many of his constituents refer the ruin of their fortunes to this so suddenly imbibed confidence in the discretion of the executive.

The public mind had, up to the time of the embargo, been engrossed with the alleged conspiracy of Aaron Burr. Among the many who had been accused as his associates, was Mr. John Smith, then a Senator from Ohio;—but Mr. Burr having been acquitted, the prosecution against the others had been at once abandoned. It was well known that Mr. Jefferson was strongly persuaded of the existence of the plot, whatever might have been its object, and that he was anxious to procure the conviction and punishment of at least some one of the parties. This was the next subject on which Mr. Adams disclosed his plenary reliance on executive wisdom.

Nine days after the passage of the embargo law, he presented a report to the Senate on the case of Mr. Smith. He declared in this document, that the conspiracy was fully proved, not indeed by legal evidence, but by evidence derived from the executive files that should be deemed sufficient; and that Mr. Smith was no doubt guilty, though he had not been tried, and if tried, could not in the opinion of the committee, have been convicted:—he spoke of justice as a cripple, to whom the crutches of the law could never give the necessary vigour and speed:—he said, that Mr. Smith "had asked a hearing and had offered evidence, and had required to be confronted with his accusers, as if," continued the report, "the committee were a Circuit Court of the United States;"—all which the committee had at once refused; and thereupon they recommended to the Senate, to declare by resolution, that Mr. Smith had been "guilty of participating in the conspiracy of Aaron Burr against the peace, liberties, and union of the people," and forthwith to expel him from the Senate. This report, be it remarked, was presented after a jury of the country had on their oaths declared that Mr. Burr, himself, was not guilty of that conspiracy, and after the law officer of the United States had entered a *nolle prosequi* in the case of Mr. Smith.

On the eighth of January, 1808, a letter was read from Mr. Smith, renewing to the Senate, the requests which he had unsuccessfully made to the committee. He solicited (I copy from the National Intelligencer of that day,) "1. to be informed specifically of the charges against him: 2. to be allowed process to compel the attendance of witnesses: and 3. to be allowed the privilege of counsel." Strange as it may appear, (I copy *verbatim* from the Intelligencer,) "Mr. Adams concisely assigned his reasons against a compliance with the two first of these requests." That is to say, he would refuse to his brother Senator, whom he had accused, the privileges guaranteed to the basest felon in the lowest courts, that of knowing the charges against him, and that of subpœnas for his witnesses. This time, however, Mr. Adams found the majority of the Senate, disposed to "deliberate" before they would "act:" Mr. Smith was permitted to bring forward his witnesses, and the accusation, like the indictment, ended in smoke.

But the great object of Mr. Adams was attained: he had evinced his unlimited devotion to the principles of his new allies; and from this

time forward, he was as zealous in supporting Mr. Jefferson's administration, as he had before been fierce in opposing it. Old republicans, whose ideas of liberty had been formed at home, were unable to equal the self-surrendering confidence, which he lavished on the President whenever opportunity presented. They smiled sometimes at the anxious zeal with which he manifested his conversion to the "Islamism of democracy," and sometimes they were obliged to control it. They enjoyed perhaps his vituperation of Mr. Ames and Mr. Pickering; but they negatived his proposition to suspend the habeas corpus act.

Under Mr. Adams' direction, the federal party in Massachusetts had sunk into a minority: his apostacy was the signal of its restoration to power. The restrictive system was borne impatiently by a community of merchants: the Legislature reflected the popular sentiment; and in the month of May, 1808, they appointed a federal successor to Mr. Adams. He had but one short session more to serve; and a new administration was then to begin at Washington. He secured to himself the character and future hopes of a martyr, by a voluntary surrender of his remnant of Senatorial life. He resigned in June, 1808.

He waited not long for his reward. One of the first acts of Mr. Madison was to nominate him for a mission to Russia; and in August, 1809, he assumed again the diplomatic vesture. A succession of additional appointments and outfits carried him the third time from court to court over the continent of Europe. He was now at St. Petersburg, and now at Ghent, and then in St. Petersburg again, and then at London; or at least if he did not make all these peregrinations, he was authorised to do so, and was paid accordingly. Some of these constructive journeys have lately been the subject of obnoxious remark. But probably there was no other way in which the splendid services of Mr. Adams could be adequately paid, and the times are past and gone when statesmen were wont to consider a nation's gratitude as their best reward.

He returned from Europe in 1817, and immediately entered upon the duties of Secretary of State. Few men could have been found so well fitted by their education and habits for this laborious and responsible post. A master of international law, conversant with the negotiations of the day, and familiar with all the secret machinery of the courts of the continent, he was peculiarly qualified to conduct the correspondence of the American government with foreign powers. Habituated as a minister abroad, to act under the direction, and advocate the opinion of others, there was no fear of his transcending the instructions of the President, or venturing too far upon the suggestions of his own judgment. He was, withal, a man accustomed to work, whose manners precluded him from entering into the fascinations of gay society, and who, however ambitious to introduce the regulations of official etiquette, might be approached by the rudest backwoodsman with the assurance that the secretary was not more favoured by the graces than himself. His style of writing, and his temper, were almost the only objections to the choice of Mr. Adams.

The secretary of state has been called the heir presumptive of the presidency. Mr. Adams was not the man to relinquish his right to the suc-

cession. At the close, therefore, of Mr. Monroe's administration, he offered himself with the Secretary at War, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a candidate for popular favours. The secretary of the treasury had also been named by a caucus of members of Congress; and a fifth candidate was spontaneously nominated by the people themselves. As the choice in the result was between Mr. Adams and the candidate last referred to, let us consider for a few minutes what stations he had filled, and how he had conducted himself in them.

PUBLIC CAREER OF GENERAL JACKSON.

The history of General Jackson's public services is so interwoven with the history of our country's glory, that it is difficult to speak of what he has done, without transcending the proper limits of a sketch like this. It is, however, for that very reason, the less necessary. There are few citizens of the United States, who did not thirteen years ago join in the homage which was spontaneously rendered to him by the nation: there is scarcely a boy who does not remember the illuminations and the bonfires, and the votive processions, with which the victory of New Orleans was celebrated, and who cannot tell how severely he suffered, and how gallantly he conquered.

His faults, too—thanks to the spirit of detraction which has brutalised the party presses of the country—are as well known as his achievements. Indeed, they were never hid: duplicity and concealment have no place in his character.

Soon after his arrival in Tennessee, he entered extensively on the practice of his profession: probably, no young member of the bar ever rose more rapidly into the most responsible business of the courts. The district south of the Ohio had just been organised, and he received, without solicitation, the appointment of attorney for the United States.

He continued exclusively devoted to his profession till the year 1796, when he was elected to a seat in the convention which framed the original constitution of Tennessee. His services in that body are yet gratefully remembered by the people of the state: he was the unvarying champion of liberal principles, and it was by his influence that several aristocratic features, which had been proposed by others, were excluded from the constitution.

Tennessee having been admitted into the Union, he was invited to be her first representative in the Congress of the United States; and the next year a vacancy occurring in the Senate, he was transferred to that body.

Congress was at this time nearly divided in political sentiment, and party violence was at its height. Both sides seemed anxious to distinguish themselves by the fierceness of their opposition to each other, rather than by a regard to the business of the state. His own opinions were decided; but he was not ambitious to retain a post in which he could not hope to be useful. He accordingly resigned in the year 1798, and returned to the walks of his profession.

Shortly after he was urged to accept a seat on the bench of the Supreme

Court; but his circumstances in life were yet far from independent, and in a few months he retired to the farm on which he yet lives, near Nashville.

On the Indian frontier every man is of necessity a soldier. While engaged in the business of a farmer, he was repeatedly called upon to head parties of his countrymen for the purpose of repelling the incursions of the savages. He had been commissioned as the only major-general of the state, in the year 1797, and the duties of that office were frequently to be performed in the field. But as the country about him became settled, these occasions were more rare; and for many years before the declaration of war against Great Britain, he remained at the Hermitage, the quiet and well satisfied cultivator of his own soil.

The commencement of hostilities in the west drew him from his retirement. The massacre by the Creek Indians at Fort Mimms of several hundred persons, under the direction of Tecumseh and his brother, the celebrated prophet, had produced a degree of excitement before unknown in Tennessee; and General Jackson was placed in command of the volunteers, who were collected for the purpose of chastising the murderers. The sufferings which his little army underwent in the protracted campaign which followed, the manner in which he shared with them every privation and toil, the brilliant exploits by which those sufferings were illustrated, and the complete success by which they were at last repaid, are known to every one. In the month of April, 1813, the Indian war was at an end, and General Jackson returned to Nashville.

He had, however, scarcely thrown off the military garb, when he received a commission of Brigadier General, and on the day following, a commi sion of Major General in the army of the United States. He was immediately called into active service in the Floridas, where he remained until the 22d of November, when he hastened to take command for the defence of New Orleans.

His conduct from that period till the retreat of the British army is recorded on the brightest page of our history. Never was defence more hopeless, never more important, never so glorious; and never was a people more grateful. The popular voice proclaimed him the benefactor of his country:—the cities vied with each other in celebrating his patriotism and his successful energy;—the churches swelled their Te Deums, and repeated the prayers of grateful hearts;—the state legislatures voted him swords and medals;—and Congress hastened to tender him national thanks and civic honours.

The victory at New Orleans closed the war: for a few weeks the defeated enemy hovered about the coast of Florida, and succeeded in reducing fort Bowyer; but in the month of February, authentic information was received of the treaty of peace, and hostilities ceased.

Although, however, the Indian tribes were to a certain extent included in the general pacification, it was manifest that the southern frontier of the Union was still open to their incursions. The Seminole Indians particularly, who inhabited the territory adjoining Florida, were at this time under the entire control of a few British traders, from whom they continued to receive large supplies of munitions of war. There was great rea-

son to believe that these men, excited by the appetite of gain, were endeavouring to engage the savages in renewed attacks upon the American settlements; and it was obvious that the Spanish authorities, if not unwilling, were at any rate too weak to restrain them. Under these circumstances, General Jackson reluctantly yielded to the wishes of the President, Mr. Madison, and retained his commission. He was subsequently directed to march against the Seminoles, whose repeated and horrible murders had filled the frontier with alarm, and to take measures for preventing their recurrence. The campaign was of short duration; the Indians were routed; the British traders, with their troop of outlaws, were dispersed; and the fortresses, under whose protection they endeavoured to make a stand, passed into the possession of the American army.

When Mr. Monroe entered upon the presidency in 1817, he invited General Jackson to accept the place of Secretary at War, and to advise with him in the arduous duty of selecting his cabinet: General Jackson declined the station; but his letters to the president, on the subject of the undue influence of party names in reference to appointments to office, will be admired so long as liberal sentiments are cherished or respected.

In 1821, General Jackson received from the President and Senate the appointment of Governor of the Floridas. They had been ceded to the United States by treaty, two years before; but the ratification had been delayed until this time. Connected with this appointment was a commission to receive possession of the colonial archives from the Spanish officers; and as it was anticipated, that the former governor, Colonel Callava, would probably throw obstacles in the way, he was invested with the almost unlimited authority of a governor general of Cuba. In the result, it appeared, that even these powers were not too ample for the emergency. But the vigilance of General Jackson detected the fraudulent projects of his Spanish predecessor, and his energy frustrated them: the titles of the residents were secured, and Colonel Callava retired to Spain, with all the angry feelings of a disappointed and needy dignitary.

Jackson had accepted the post of Governor of Florida with the clear understanding that he should be permitted to resign it so soon as the new government could be organised by his exertions. The station was one of great responsibility, emolument, and honour; but he was anxious to divest himself of the cares of office, and hastened back to his farm and fireside. Here he remained a private citizen, refusing the distinction of minister plenipotentiary to the court of Mexico, of which Mr. Monroe solicited his acceptance, until the winter of 1823, when yielding to the urgent wishes of his friends, he a second time, after an interval of twenty-five years, took his seat in the Senate of the United States. But the people of Pennsylvania and Tennessee having formally nominated him for the office of chief magistrate of the Union, he refused to remain in a situation which exposed his conduct to misconstruction, and in 1825 he resigned the remainder of his senatorial term. For the last three years he has lived on his farm.

Mr. Correa, who was a shrewd observer of men and things, remarked when in this country as the minister of Portugal, "the man who can pass

the ordeal of an American election, is fit for a communion with angels." It was scarcely to be expected that the lengthened and brilliant services of Andrew Jackson could screen him from this ordeal. No man who has faithfully discharged duties like those which were repeatedly imposed on him, can hope to escape the enmity of the vile, and the censures of the timid. In many instances, it was his business to develope fraud, to punish crime, to watch over immense interests, amidst a concourse of embarrassing circumstances, surrounded by faithless associates, and open enemies. How could he escape their hostility whom it was his duty to expose and condemn?

Before General Jackson was a candidate for the presidency, the only complaints against him were those made originally by the Spanish government, and afterwards repeated by a committee of the Senate. It was said that he had without legal warrant executed two white men whom he had taken prisoners during the Seminole campaign, and that he had violated the neutrality of the Spanish territory. The facts on which these charges rest have been the subject of so much remark, that it is hardly necessary to dilate on them. As to the first charge, the truth was, and yet is admitted, that the white men who are referred to were found associated with the Indians, instigating them to the commission of every atrocity, and exulting with them over the massacre of women and infants. It is admitted that they were fairly if not formally tried, and that the evidence against them was conclusive. When to these admissions is added the fact, that the President did not censure the proceeding—that Congress justified it—and that the British government, whose subjects they were, has never to this hour complained of it; but that, on the contrary, it has been referred to on the floor of parliament as a transaction fully warranted by circumstances; surely if there was error on the part of General Jackson, it may be forgiven.

The second charge was ably repelled by Mr. Adams, while secretary of state, in his letter to our minister at the court of Madrid. He proved incontestably that the conduct of Gen. Jackson in taking possession of St. Marks and Pensacola was in accordance with the conceded principles of the law of nations: they were posts of refuge for the enemies of the United States, and nurseries of crime against our peace. The Spanish government had declared its inability to exclude the retreating savages from its territory, or to prevent their return to ours:—nothing remained to the American general but to occupy with his army these posts, which were useless to Spain, and formidable sources of injury to our citizens. This transaction, too, received the sanction of the president, and was subjected to congressional scrutiny, without being disapproved.

Since the contested election of 1824, other charges have been industriously sought against General Jackson. It has been said that in the year 1807 he was an adherent of Aaron Burr in his projected treason. To this assertion are opposed the contemporary declarations of Mr. Jefferson, that Gen. Jackson was one of the most useful among those by whom Burr's intentions were detected and baffled,—General Jackson's own letter to governor Claiborne, of Louisiana, written at the time, in

which he declares his suspicions that a treasonable project was on foot, and suggests the necessity of watchfulness and energy on the part of the government,—and the united testimony of those who are familiar with the history of the western states for the last twenty years.

Another objection to General Jackson is found in the fact, that a short time previous to the news of peace, he approved the sentence of a court martial, under which several mutineers suffered death. This charge derives all its interest from the circumstances which attended its investigation by the House of Representatives. That a mutiny, such as this was, should have led to the trial and punishment of the delinquents, was certainly not a matter of astonishment or horror;—and, after a court martial, composed of their own associates and neighbours, had thought it essential to the safety of the army, that capital punishment should be inflicted,—that the commanding general, at the distance of two hundred miles, separated from the scene of their crimes and their trial by an almost trackless wilderness, should have felt it his duty to let the sentence take effect, was scarcely criminal on his part;—and that certain stipendiaries should, by the aid of doggrel monodies, forged letters, and woodcut monuments, labour to misrepresent these facts, and mislead the public sympathies, was to have been expected. But that a high functionary of the government should condescend to the irregular arrangement of documents, so as by confusing the order of incidents to make that appear unauthorised, which had been positively commanded:—this would appear the most wonderful incident in the electioneering campaign, were it not that the same dignitary had afterwards employed himself in distributing printed copies of the same documents arranged in the same delusive order, after the device had been discovered and exposed. Happily for the honour of our country, Mr. Adams is not chargeable with any but the official follies of his secretaries: whatever may be his faults, his enemies acquit him most fully of all connivance at a baseness like this.

Posterity will wonder as it reads that Jackson's conduct at New Orleans has also been the theme of censure. It is easy, after the desperate field has been fought and won, when the enemy has left our shores, and "Peace again her wheaten garland wears,"—it is easy, as the stern necessities of the moment of peril fade away upon the memory, for casuists to discuss with keen-set argument, the propriety of each particular resort which was prompted by the exigency. But it is enough for the patriot that the motive was honest, and for the statesman that the result was successful. Who questions the purity of Jackson's motives in the campaign of Orleans? What honourable mind can bring itself to doubt his patriotism, his mere patriotism in all the progress of the siege?—When will it be denied that the very measures to which his energy gave being, were dictated by an exclusive and intelligent regard to the interests of his country? —If he appropriated the property of others to the purposes of defence, had he not previously exhausted his own?—If he violated the law, was it not for the preservation of liberty?—He broke through the forms of the constitution; but was it not to save the land?—Where would have been the constitution, and what the law, had the storming party entered New Orleans?

"A strict observance of the written laws," says Mr. Jefferson, in a letter which has been recently published, "is doubtless *one* of the high duties of a good citizen: but it is not *the highest*. The laws of necessity, of self-preservation, of saving our country when in danger, are of higher obligation. To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to written law, would be to lose the law itself, with life, liberty, property, and all those who are enjoying them with us; thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means. When, in the battle of Germantown, General Washington's army was annoyed from Chew's house, he did not hesitate to plant his cannon against it, although the property of a citizen. When he besieged Yorktown, he levelled the suburbs, feeling that the laws of property must be postponed to the safety of the nation. While that army was before York, the Governor of Virginia took horses, carriages, provisions, and even men, by force, to enable that army to stay together till it could master the public enemy; and he was justified. A ship at sea, in distress for provisions, meets another having abundance, yet refusing a supply; the law of self preservation authorizes the distressed to take a supply by force. In all these cases the unwritten laws of necessity, of self-preservation, and of public safety, control the written laws of meum and tuum.

"The officer who is called to act on this superior ground, does indeed risk himself on the justice of the controlling powers of the constitution, and his station makes it his duty to incur that risk. But those controlling powers, and his fellow citizens generally, are bound to judge according to the circumstances under which he acted. They are not to transfer the information of this place or moment to the time and place of his action: but to put themselves into his situation. The line of discrimination between cases may be difficult; but the good officer is bound to draw it at his own peril, and throw himself on the justice of his country and the rectitude of his motives."

There are yet some other charges against Gen. Jackson, which false in fact, and unimportant if true, have been made of consequence only by the zeal with which his friends have laboured to disprove them. One of them may serve as a specimen. It has been recently discovered, that General Andrew Jackson is ignorant of the art of spelling; that he is grossly illiterate. Assuredly, "if it be so, it is a grievous fault." Let us examine how it stands: perhaps in the hasty review which we have made of the history of the candidates, their literary qualifications may have been too slightly noticed.

Maternal fondness and piety had destined Andrew Jackson to the ministry. Before entering the army as a soldier, he had already acquired a knowledge of the Latin language, and had made some progress in Greek. He was for two years a student of law, nine years a practising lawyer, twice a Senator, once a Judge, a Governor of a territory, and the commander for several years of a military district. While he held this command, Col. Monroe was the Secretary at war; yet Col. Monroe was afterwards desirous of placing him in his Cabinet. His correspondence with the different departments at Washington would fill many volumes, and as

Secretary or as President, Col. Monroe had read it all; yet he tendered him the mission to Mexico. If the story of Jackson's ignorance be true, there is no way to account for these things, except by supposing that Col. Monroe himself may be somewhat unskilled in the orthographic mystery, and thus taking an appeal from his judgment in the matter. If so, the correspondence itself is on the files, and the curious must examine for themselves.

They will find, who take this trouble, that as for the matter of his letters, it is plain, simple, common sense; and that as for the style, it is rapid, but clear, and never requires a second reading to discover its meaning. They will encounter few brilliant metaphors, no Greek quotations, no toilsome and painful struggles after eloquence. Language, said a great diplomatist, was given to man to conceal his thoughts: if this be so, Gen. Jackson will be found unskilled in the appropriate use of words. But if to state facts precisely and forcibly, to point out the connection between premises and the conclusion to which they tend, and to transfer to others the vivid impress of his own warm feelings: if these be the object of language, then must it be admitted by all who have examined the productions of his pen, that Andrew Jackson writes well and eloquently.

It is true, as I have myself found in reading over some packets of his letters, that the old gentleman is culpably negligent, when in haste, about dotting his i's and crossing his t's, and that he is by no means, as careful as he might be, about beginning his sentences with capital letters. The printer, who knows more about this matter than I do, tells me too, that General Jackson is really irregular in his orthography; as much so, he says, as Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Everett, and more so than Mr. Adams. I know Mr. Everett to be a well-educated scholar, and, I confess that I detected no errors in General Jackson's writing. Still, I suppose the printer is right: it is his business to decypher manuscripts, and he has the dictionary at his finger's ends.

But if General Jackson's spelling is sometimes bad, it must be conceded that Mr. Adams' hand-writing is seldom good: I doubt whether one or the other could be recommended for usher of a township school. One of the cardinal rules of English chirography is, that the lines should be parallel to the upper edge of the paper: Mr. Adams alternately writes on the diagonals, and on those undulating lines, which painters have characterised as the lines of beauty. He does few things like common men: his pen is of gold, neatly screwed into the head of a silver thimble, and worn, as that useful little instrument often is, on the finger tip.

But Mr. Adams is a learned man; he reads Byron and Puffendorff, and Jean Jacques Rousseau; has studied chemistry and meteorology, and metaphysics, and will dispute with any man "de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis," or as our friend Mathews would translate it, about "all that sort of thing, and every thing in the world." With a little more knowledge of human character, he would be admirably fitted for the first chair of a university; and were I a member of the Corporation of Harvard, I should certainly defer the selection of a president for that institution till after the ides of March.

Still there are critics who affirm that Mr. Adams' pretensions to superior literary excellence cannot be sustained. They admit, that in scholarlike attention to dots and points, and capital letters, he is altogether exemplary: but they say that his style is circumlocutory, and diffuse, and overcharged with ornament. They perhaps trench upon the prerogative of the grammatical Mr. Grout, when they assail the construction of his sentences, as violating the rules of syntax; but the public is on their side, when they say that his figures of speech are more frequently dazzling than intelligible. To this day no mortal man has ventured to interpret the closing sentence of his Fourth of July Oration; and the explanations which have been devised by himself and others, to illustrate his "Ebony and Topaz" toast, have, like Macbeth's bloody instructions, returned in every case "to plague the inventor." Indeed, there are some critics who go so far as to doubt whether Mr. Adams' speeches and writings would ever have been considered models of composition, if the writer had not happened to occupy a high official station.

> "What wretched stuff," say they, "this madrigal would be,
> In some poor starving sonnetteer, or me!—
> But let *a lord* once own the happy lines,
> How the wit brightens, how the style refines!"

It is, however, of small moment to the American people, what may be the character of Mr. Adams' or General Jackson's mode of writing. They will never inquire whether he can compose sonnets for the Anthology, or criticise his own administration in the pages of the American Quarterly. They ask that the President should be a wise man, not a wit—a man of clear perception, sound judgment, and fixed principles; and if unused to the mystifications of diplomacy, as the special pleading between states is termed, they will like him all the better. He is to preside over a people who have no secrets, who wish no participation in the business of other nations, and will tolerate no interference in their own. He is not elected to be the mediator of the South American republics, to improve the Catholicism of their faith, or gather them together into splendid and dangerous combinations. He is called to watch over the interests of *our* country alone, and to guard with exclusive jealousy our national honour. And this he may do without pointing an epigram, or inditing a protocol.

I have neither leisure nor inclination to extend this comparison of the personal qualifications of the two candidates. No one can be more sensible of its imperfections than myself; but, I trust, it has the merit of being honest; and, as times go, that is no small praise. I have not attempted to disguise my preference for the character of General Jackson; but it has been my aim, in all cases, truly to narrate the facts on which my preference is founded. In a future number I may perhaps examine the conduct of Mr. Adams since his election: at present I must confine myself to a few simple reminiscences of the manner in which his election was effected.

Whatever may be the opinions of those whom party zeal has blinded, it can hardly be doubted that the *merely popular* sentiment was favourable in 1824 to the election of General Jackson. It is not easy to determine what would have been the vote in those states where the presidential electors were chosen by the legislature, had the election been by the people directly; but it is unquestionable, that, where the popular wish was expressed by a public election, General Jackson had a strong majority in his favour. Of the votes given throughout the Union for the several electoral tickets, about 153,000 were for General Jackson, while Mr. Adams had little more than 105,000, Mr. Crawford 47,000, and Mr. Clay about 600 less than Mr. Crawford. Of the electoral votes in like manner, General Jackson had 99, Mr. Adams 84, Mr. Crawford 41, and Mr. Clay 37. Mr. Calhoun, satisfied with the nearly unanimous support which it was evident he would receive for the place of Vice-president, had withdrawn from the presidential contest before the election; and Mr. Clay, having the smallest vote of the four candidates who remained in the field, was of course not returned to the House of Representatives. From the three others that body was required by the constitution to elect a president of the United States.

In the electoral vote which had taken place in December, 1824, it was known that Mr. Adams had not received a majority of any one electoral college, south of New England, with the solitary exception of New York. As the question before the House of Representatives was to be decided by states, each having one vote, it was evident that if the same geographical limit to his support again obtained, he could have but seven out of the thirteen states whose concurrence was necessary to his election.

The friends of Mr. Clay had avowed their determination to act in concert; and before the dispute between that gentleman and Mr. Kremer, it was universally understood that their object in so acting together was to secure for the country, in some distinguished post, the services of the gentleman in whose capacity and honour they had so much confidence. As Mr. Clay had received majorities in the electoral colleges of three states, and as his friends in the House of Representatives could give the vote of the same number of states to the candidate whom they might select, his intentions were the subject of anxious conjecture among the several classes of expectants.

As a western man, ambitious himself of the highest distinction in the country, it was obviously his policy to prevent the choice of a western candidate; and the rumour of his determination to support Mr. Adams, which gained currency a short time before the decision of the House, was received by the public without great surprise. The intention of Mr. Adams to offer to Mr. Clay in return the place of secretary of state, which formed a part of the rumour, was doubted by some; but those who knew the early history of Mr. Adams, and the stern rectitude of General Jackson's principles, remembered the avowal of Mr. Clay's friends, and admitted that the story might be true. The only seeming difficulty in the way was found in the circumstance that Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay were on terms of doubtful friendship, and had but a short time before been

marking out the ring for a newspaper combat. They were tyros in politics who imagined a difficulty in this.

The votes of Mr. Clay's immediate friends, added to those of New England, would give Mr. Adams but nine votes: four more were to be sought.

Missouri had voted for Mr. Clay in the electoral college; but Mr. Adams' ticket had received in that state only three hundred votes, while General Jackson's received nearly a thousand:—considerations which even now can only be guessed at, determined Mr. Scott, the representative from that state, to give Mr. Adams her support.

Illinois had in the electoral college given a majority of votes for General Jackson; motives as inexplicable for the time as those which swayed Mr. Scott, had their influence on the representative of this state, Mr. Cook. He, too, became the supporter of Mr. Adams.

Still there were two votes wanting. New York was divided: seventeen of her representatives were for Mr. Adams, two were for General Jackson, fifteen for Mr. Crawford: Mr. Crawford's ill health, however, had induced one of his friends to doubt as to the policy of electing him. That friend was General Van Rensselaer; but he was a high-minded federalist, who had known Mr. Adams through all his changes:—Could he be persuaded to trust him again?

The Representatives of Maryland were also divided between Mr. Adams, General Jackson, and Mr. Crawford. But Mr. Warfield had some thoughts of changing his candidate; and his vote would give Mr. Adams a majority: he too was a federalist, and was not indifferent to the interests of his old party-friends.

To control the votes of New York and Maryland, was the business of the much talked of *Webster pledge*,—a pledge which, announced at first with a variety of erroneous but unimportant details, was afterwards contradicted somewhat too broadly by the over zealous friends of Mr. Adams in the city of New York, yet is now substantially proved by evidence, that Mr. Webster himself does not venture to gainsay. The real story, and a part of the authority on which it rests, are thus stated in a leading newspaper of the day. The gentlemen who are named as the witnesses, are above suspicion; and their declaration has never been, and never will be contradicted by a responsible person.

"Some time in the month of July or August, 1827, the Commissioners of New Jersey for settling the boundary line with New York, met at Newark, and afterwards at Hoboken; and Mr. Richard Stockton, Theodore Frelinghuysen, Lucius Q. C. Elmer, and James Parker, were four of the Jersey Commissioners. Mr. Stockton, in the course of the session, in a conversation with the other three above named gentlemen, stated that Mr. Webster had told him that 'he had in his possession a paper purporting to be the substance of a conversation he had held with Mr. Adams, previous to his election to the Presidency; and which was induced by his (Webster's) wish to know from Mr. Adams the policy he would, in the event of his election, pursue towards the old federal party, as it might have some bearing on the then pending question. That Mr.

Adams professed great regard for the federal party, and thought them entitled to a participation in office, in common with the whole nation, and promised, or avowed it to be his intention, if elected, to give them a fair participation accordingly.' Mr. Webster further said, that in order that no mistake might afterwards occur, or that he might not be brought into collision with Mr. Adams on the score of a misunderstanding, 'he had, on going away, reduced the subtance of the conversation to writing, and afterwards showed it to Mr. Adams, who, after reading it, took up a pen and corrected it in one or two points, by erasing some words, and interlining others, and then returned it to him.' This paper he offered to show to Mr. Stockton; but it is believed that Mr. Stockton did not see it, because he had full confidence in Mr. Webster's word."

The paper referred to, was, however, communicated to Mr. Van Rensselaer and Mr. Warfield:—it was too definite, they thought, to be evaded: and they became the friends, as that word is used, of Mr. Adams.

On the 9th of February, 1825, the House of Representatives proceeded to the election of the President. At the first ballotting, the votes of the six New England States,—of the states of Kentucky, Ohio, and Louisianna, which were supposed to be under the influence of Mr. Clay,—and of the States of *Missouri*, *Illinois*, *New York* and *Maryland*, were given to Mr. Adams;—and he was elected.——

The sequel is told in a few words.

The first act of Mr. Adams was to appoint Mr. Clay Secretary of State.

The people of Missouri, at the earliest opportunity, indignantly dismissed Mr. Scott:—Mr. Adams forthwith appointed him Inspector of land offices, with a salary of $5000.

The people of Illinois dismissed Mr. Cook:—he was sent at once on a secret mission, with a salary from the contingent fund of $4500 a year.

The pledge to the federalists alone was found too costly and hazardous to keep. It is to be renewed and regarded, when Mr. Adams obtains his re-election.

A PENNSYLVANIAN.

Philadelphia, August, 1828.

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